F Post 1-19-73

Washington Merry-Go-Round by JACK ANDERSON

WASHINGTON — From his flowing white mane to the gold carpet he insists upon trodding when he enters the Supreme Court chamber, Warren Burger is a distinguished chief justice who will suffer no indignities to the institution for which he stands.

He solemnly rejected a request, therefore, from Columbia Pictures producer Gerald Ayres to shoot a three-minute segment showing drunken sailors cavorting on the front steps of the Supreme Court.

Nor was the chief justice appeased by an offer to change the script and sober up the sailors. A press spokesman admitted the revised segment would not be "disrespectful to the Supreme Court." But the star of the picture, Jack Nicholson, apparently is not one of Burger's favorite performers.

Nicholson has had the effrontery to call for the impeachment of President Nixon who appointed Burger to the high court. Of course, Nicholson's role in the movie is nonpolitical. He plays a fun-loving Navy petty officer who is assigned with another sailor to accompany a prisoner from the Norfolk Naval Station to a naval prison in New Hampshire.

The odyssey takes the zany trio through Washington where the script calls for them to get lost and drunk among the imposing government buildings.

The chief justice, however, would have no part of Nicholson drunk or sober. Producer Ayres, therefore, began making arrangements to shoot the segment in front of the National Art Gallery, whose architecture is as stately as that of the Supreme Court.

Although he was advised there would be "no problem," the gallery a week later abruptly turned down his request. Not until then did the flabbergasted Ayres learn that Chief Justice Burger was chairman, too, of the gallery's board of trustees.

Indeed, a friend inside the government, who tried to help Ayres find a site for his three minutes of filming, wrote to him on November 10: "It appears that a request to use any of the government buildings that would be suitable is going to be coordinated with the Supreme Court, and that's a closed door. Considering the circumstances, I don't think any further effort will be productive."

Nevertheless, Ayres finally found one government building that didn't come under Burger's sway. The producer convinced officials at the National Archives that his intentions were innocent and last week was able to film the three-minute segment that took three months to arrange.

Footnote: The eminent chief justice is not one to be trifled with. When a fellow passenger blew cigar smoke in his face aboard the Washington-New York Metroliner, Burger wrote an indignant letter to Transportation Secretary John Volpe and put a stop to cigar smoking on the train. Another time, a late caller at Burger's home was startled to be greeted at the door by the white-haired jurist with a drawn pistol.

NIXON'S NOTES — President Nixon is spending most of his time by himself these days working on his inaugural, state of the union and other messages. He writes down his ideas laboriously in longhand on legal-length, lined yellow paper, then dictates from these notes to his personal secretary, Rose Mary Woods. His preliminary notes, according to our White House sources, are hard hitting. He will make it perfectly clear that he is going to run the country for the next four years the way he believes it should be run, and he isn't going to be deterred by his critics.

SECRET NUMBERS — The FBI has been busily distributing secret telephone numbers to street people who, in return for a suitable reward, might be willing to confide what the radicals are planning during the presidential inaugural. The potential informers are promised cash, educational opportunities, even permanent paid informant status. The hush-hush numbers have fallen into our hands and we couldn't resist the temptation to dial one. We wound up talking with Agent Harry Willis who was dismayed to hear from us. "I am not at liberty to comment," he barked.

ANTIPOVERTY JUNKET — In anticipation that the antipoverty budget would be cut, one regional antipoverty director took off two weeks ago for a rush trip to the South Sea islands while he still had government travel money to spend. He is Tom Mercer, the regional director in San Francisco, who flew to Hawaii and Pago Pago with two attractive companions — Miss Linda Alm, an airline stewardess, and Miss Dorothy Richardson, a secretary. The antipoverty agency paid expenses for the three travelers. The total bill charged to the taxpayers came to $2,800.